

13. Preaching, or giving a reflection on the scripture, is integral to the community's hearing of God's Word, to the sanctification of Sunday, and to their baptismal call to evangelisation and mission. Liturgical preaching or giving a reflection on the scriptures is carried out by women and men formed and delegated for this ministry by their bishop.

22. Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest can never be presented as an equal choice with participation in the celebration of the Mass. For this reason in any one parish or Mass centre, when there is to be a Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, including its anticipation on Saturday evening, Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest are normally not conducted. They should not detract from nor compete with the celebration of the Sunday Mass, the principal form of parish liturgy. They are never an alternative, in any real sense, to the Sunday Eucharist.

25. The preparation of the whole parish for these celebrations is of vital importance and should always be addressed, where possible, before the introduction of Sunday Celebration of the Word.

CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY Documents of the Second Vatican Council 1963

Bible services should be encouraged, especially on the vigils of the more solemn feasts, on some weekdays in Advent and Lent, and on Sundays and feast days. They are particularly to be commended in places where no priest is available; when this is so, a deacon or some other person authorized by the bishop should preside over the celebration. 35.4

Code of Canon Law 1983

If participation in the eucharistic celebration becomes impossible because of the absence of a sacred minister or for another grave cause, it is strongly recommended that the faithful take part in a liturgy of the word if such a liturgy is celebrated in a parish church or other sacred place according to the prescripts of the diocesan bishop or that they devote themselves to prayer for a suitable time alone, as a family, or, as the occasion permits, in groups of families. 1248, no 2.

Evangelii Gaudium – the Joy of the Gospel

102. Lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the people of God... There has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church. We can count on many lay persons, although still not nearly enough, who have a deeply-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith.

Training for Leaders Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion

All Saints Parish



Resources document produced 2016

Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest

1988 – Congregation for Divine Worship

1. From the day of Pentecost, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Church of Christ has always faithfully come together to celebrate the paschal mystery on the day called "the Lord's Day" in memory of the Lord's resurrection. In the Sunday assembly the Church reads in all the Scriptures those things that concern Christ and celebrates the eucharist as the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord until he comes.

8. "By a tradition handed down from the apostles and having its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day, which, with good reason, bears the name of the Lord's Day or Sunday."

9. Evidence of the gathering of the faithful on the day which the New Testament itself already designates as the Lord's Day appears explicitly in documents of the first and second centuries. Outstanding among such evidence is the testimony of Saint Justin: "On this day which is called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together in one place." But the day of gathering for Christians did not coincide with the day of rest in the Greek or Roman calendar and therefore event he gathering on this day was a sign to fellow citizens of the Christians' identity.

10. From the earliest centuries pastors had never failed to counsel their people on the need to gather together on Sunday. "Because you are Christ's members, do not scatter from the church by not coming together . . . do not neglect your Savior or separate him from his members. Do not shatter or scatter the Body of Christ" Vatican Council II recalled this teaching in the following words: "On this day Christ's faithful must gather together, so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, resurrection, and glorification of the Lord Jesus and may thank God, who 'has begotten them again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' " (1Peter 1:3).

11. Saint Ignatius of Antioch pointed out the importance of the Sunday celebration for the life of the faithful: "Christians no longer observe the sabbath day, but live according to the Lord's Day, on which our life was restored through Jesus Christ and his death." In their "sense of the faith" (sensus fidelium) the faithful, now as in the past, have held the Lord's Day in such high regard that they have never willingly omitted its observance even in times of persecution or in the midst of cultures alien or hostile to the Christian faith.

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS in the absence of a priest: DIRECTIVES for the dioceses of Australia

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (2004)

2. Over recent years, the Church in many parts of Australia has been experiencing a decline in the number of priests. Although the Eucharist is the very heart of Sunday parish communities are not always assured of the weekly celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. The lack of a priest and the need for Sunday worship in that situation is nothing new in Australia, especially in rural communities. Today, in addition to a growing Catholic population with fewer and older priests, and population shifts from rural to city centres, other kinds of pastoral situations present themselves. Christians in the armed forces, prisons, hospitals, and senior citizens' and nursing homes are unable to celebrate the Sunday Mass. In all these developments, the ministry of the priest continues to be essential for the life of the Church.

3. The Mass remains the proper way of celebrating Sunday, and other celebrations can never equal or replace it. Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest enable the continuance of a community's Sunday worship, but they are never to be used where it would be feasible for the faithful to participate in the celebration of the Sunday Mass.

4. Liturgy is the celebration of the whole Church. Christ is always present to his Church: in the assembly of the faithful gathered in his name, in the proclamation of the Word, in the person of the minister, and above all, in the eucharistic elements. The Christian community that comes together on Sunday to give God praise and thanks is, by its union with the bishop, united with the whole Church assembling on Sunday. Communities deprived of the Eucharist and of its ordained ministers are not cut off from the Church. This unity is maintained and celebrated in Sunday assemblies when there is no priest to preside over the assembly.

6. Although a local community cannot have a complete liturgical celebration of the Lord's Day, the community, nevertheless, is still called to assemble on Sunday. Even when there are other types of liturgical celebrations on weekdays, people still have a right to take part in Sunday worship and to hear proclaimed in their midst the Word of God that is proclaimed to all the faithful throughout the world.

8. In the dioceses of Australia, when the Eucharist is unable to be celebrated on Sunday, the authorised form of liturgical assembly is a Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest.

10. In Australia such celebrations are known as a:

- Sunday Celebration of the Word and Communion

2. The rubrics given in the template are to be observed because they ensure reverence, and also clearly indicate, along with the absence of vestments, that a Service is being held, not a Eucharist being celebrated.
3. The circumstances in which the LWWHC are used:
 - a. When the local priest is on leave, or when the local priest is providing Masses for a neighbouring parish whose priest is on leave, as indicated on page one of this letter. It may also be used when the local priest is ill.
 - b. We are in a situation whereby most parishes have only one priest. It will happen that a priest may be called away on some Sunday, because of a conference, or a family occasion, or whatever sound reason. This will be an occasion for the celebration of the LWWHC. Therefore the celebration of a LWWHC may not be seen as an unusual event, but in a way is a feature of the diocese because of our size and the number of our clergy, and one should not expect a priest to leave his own parish to celebrate the Eucharist elsewhere, except for the circumstances indicated above when a priest is on leave.
4. As a diocese we have a duty of care in regard to highway travel. It is not appropriate to expect a priest to travel long distances to celebrate the Eucharist in another parish, when a LWWHC may be conducted there properly. Safety and the physical drain, especially for someone no longer young, are valid considerations to be entertained.
5. All the above makes it abundantly clear that certain people in the parish should be given the proper training to conduct and lead a service of LWWHC. Attention must be given to a reflection that is based on the Gospel, and the general intercessions that reflect the needs of the Church and the community. Attention must be given to communicating to such lay leaders the appropriate ways of reverencing the Eucharist under the form of the sacred host, and administering Holy Communion. Attention could also be given to formation of the parishioners so that they might support the worship and cooperate with the leaders wholeheartedly.

BLESSINGS FOR THE DIOCESE:

One of the blessings for the Church of our diocese is that the LWWHC is an indication of the priority the parish community wishes to place, in the absence of the Eucharist, on the need to strengthen each other and their community through the hearing of the Word, through prayer together, and the receiving of Holy Communion.

13. Pastoral efforts should have this aim above all that the sacrifice of the Mass on Sunday be regarded as the only true actualization of the Lord's paschal mystery and as the most complete manifestation of the Church: "Hence the Lord's Day is the first holy day of all and should be proposed to the devotion of the faithful and taught to them. . . . Other celebrations, unless they be truly of great importance, shall not have precedence over the Sunday, the foundation and core of the whole liturgical year."

16. Finally, pastoral effort should concentrate on measures which have as their purpose "that the Lord's Day becomes in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work." In this way Sunday will stand out in today's culture as a sign of freedom and consequently as a day established for the well-being of the human person, which clearly is a higher value than commerce or industrial production.

20. Among the forms of celebration found in liturgical tradition when Mass is not possible, a celebration of the word of God is particularly recommended, and also its completion, when possible, by eucharistic communion. In this way the faithful can be nourished by both the word of God and the body of Christ. "By hearing the word of God the faithful learn that the marvels it proclaims reach their climax in the paschal mystery, of which the Mass is a sacramental memorial and in which they share by communion." Further, in certain circumstances the Sunday celebration can be combined with the celebration of one or more of the sacraments and especially of the sacraments and in ways that are suited to the needs of each community.

22. Any confusion between this kind of assembly and a eucharistic celebration must be carefully avoided. Assemblies of this kind should not take away but rather increase the desire of the faithful to take part in the celebration of the eucharist, and should make them more eager to be present at the celebration of the eucharist.

24. It belongs to the diocesan bishop, after hearing the council of presbyters, to decide whether Sunday assemblies without the celebration of the eucharist should be held on a regular basis in his diocese. It belongs also to the bishop, after considering the place and persons involved, to set out both general and particular norms for such celebrations. These assemblies are therefore to be conducted only in virtue of their convocation by the bishop and only under the pastoral ministry of the pastor.

28. When Mass cannot be celebrated, the pastor is to ensure that holy communion be given. He is also to see to it that there is a celebration of the eucharist in due time in each community. The consecrated hosts are to be renewed often and kept in a safe place.

30. Those to be chosen first by the pastor are readers and acolytes who have been duly instituted for the service of the altar and of the word of God. If there are no such instituted ministers available, other laypersons, both men and women, may be appointed; they can carry out this responsibility in virtue of their baptism and confirmation. Such persons are to be chosen in view of the consistency of their way of life with the Gospel and in the expectation of their being acceptable to the community of

the faithful. Appointment is usually to be for a definite time and is to be made known publicly to the community. It is fitting that there be a celebration in which prayers are offered to God on behalf of those appointed.

The pastor is to see to the suitable and continuous instruction of these laypersons and to prepare with them worthy celebrations.

35. The order to be followed in a Sunday celebration that does not include Mass consists of two parts, the celebration of the word of God and the giving of holy communion. Nothing that is proper to Mass, and particularly the presentation of the gifts and the eucharistic prayer, is to be inserted into the celebration. The order of celebration is to be arranged in such a way that it is truly conducive to prayer and conveys the image not of a simple meeting but of a genuine liturgical assembly.

36. As a rule the texts for the prayers and readings for each Sunday or solemnity are to be taken from The Roman Missal (Sacramentary) and the Lectionary for Mass. In this way the faithful will follow the cycle of the liturgical year and will pray and listen to the word of God in communion with the other communities of the Church.

37. In preparing the celebration the pastor together with the appointed laypersons may make adaptations suited to the number of those who will take part in the celebration, the ability of the leaders (animators), and the kind of instruments available for the music and the singing.

39. A layperson who leads the assembly acts as one among equals...and in the case of blessings when the minister is a layperson ("May the Lord bless us . . ."; "Let us praise the Lord . . ."). The layperson is not to use words that are proper to a priest or deacon and is to omit rites that are too readily associated with the Mass, for example, greetings - especially "The Lord be with you" - and dismissals, since these might give the impression that the layperson is a sacred minister.

40. The lay leader wears vesture that is suitable for his or her function or the vesture prescribed by the bishop. He or she does not use the presidential chair, but another chair prepared outside the sanctuary. Since the altar is the table of sacrifice and of the paschal banquet, its only use in this celebration is for the rite of communion, when the consecrated bread is placed on it before communion is given.

41. The following is an outline of the elements of the celebration.

- a). Introductory rites. The purpose of these is to form the gathered faithful into a community and for them to dispose themselves for the celebration.
- b). Liturgy of the word. Here God speaks to his people, to disclose to them the mystery of redemption and salvation; the people respond through the profession of faith and the general intercessions.
- c) Thanksgiving. Here God is blessed for his great glory.

d) Communion rites. These are an expression and accomplishment of communion with Christ and with his members, especially with those who on this same day take part in the eucharistic sacrifice.

e) Concluding rites. These point to the connection existing between the liturgy and the Christian life.

The conference of bishops, or the individual bishop himself, may, in view of the conditions of the place and the people involved, determine more precisely the details of the celebration, using resources prepared by the national or diocesan liturgical committee, but the general structure of the celebration should not be changed unnecessarily.

42. In the introduction at the beginning of the celebration, or at some other point, the leader should make mention of the community of the faithful with whom the pastor is celebrating the eucharist on that Sunday and urge the assembly to unite itself in spirit with that community.

Letter from Bishop Greg O'Kelly 12/11/2015 Concerning Services of the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion in the Diocese of Port Pirie...

The use of the Service of the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion (LWWHC) has become common in our diocese for some years, made necessary by the inability to provide a priest in all parishes each Sunday, and when it happens that a priest must be absent from the diocese...

The LWWHC is not a substitute Mass. There is nothing of the mystical quality of the representation to the saving events of Calvary and Easter that are captured in the theology of the Eucharist. LWWHC is a devotional celebration, an important gathering of the people of the parish to hear the word of God, to pray together, and to receive Holy Communion.

Although it is always important to distinguish the LWWHC from the Eucharist, nonetheless it is the way we gather as a community to worship when we do not have a priest to celebrate the Mass. It is hoped that parishioners would always support their liturgy leaders by willingly attending the liturgy.

...INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion would normally be reserved for a Sunday. The readings of the Sunday are to be employed. If the priest is absent and there occurs a major Feast Day or Solemnity through the week, then a Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion may be held.